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The Truth of Antiphon's *Truth*

My intention in this paper is to explore some of the implications of the fact that the fifth-century sophistic thinker Antiphon entitled his main "sophistic" treatise, published in two books, *Truth* (*Alêtheia*). As in the case of Protagoras' treatise of the same name,¹ this title may be understood as an indication that Antiphon is responding to Parmenides' "Way of Truth" and is affirming his own view of the truth about the world, that *physis* is more real or truer than *nomos*, or in other words, statements are true if and only if they correspond to *physis*, but not to *nomos*. I have no quarrel with seeing Antiphon's *Truth* as in some respect a response to Parmenides, but I think the relationship between the works of these thinkers is more complex, and these titles raise fundamental questions about what each author, and their contemporaries, understood by "truth."

Now it is evident that in several places in the extant papyrus fragments of *Truth* (DK B 44) the word *alêtheia* implies a straightforward relationship of correspondence between truth and reality.² Indeed, a correspondence view of truth was standard in most Greek authors up to Antiphon's day, and orators in particular frequently talked about "truth" in an apparently straightforward sense of "correspondence to reality." In choosing the title *Truth*, however, Antiphon may intend to suggest something more than a simple correspondence between his *logos* and an external reality. I shall suggest that he is also exploring the possibility that both *logos* itself and the "reality" to which a "true" *logos* corresponds are complex and ambiguous, and that as a consequence the nature of truth is not a simple correspondence. There is thus a certain irony, or at least an intentional ambiguity, in the title *Truth*: the truth of Antiphon's *Truth* is, in my view, that there is more than one truth and that a true *logos* must somehow comprehend a number of different truths.

Obviously this thesis will need to be defended primarily with respect to the text of the surviving fragments of *Truth*, but before I turn to these, it will help to consider some evidence from other Greek authors and from other works of Antiphon. This sense of the ambiguity of language and of reality that I am postulating for Antiphon's *Truth* can be found, I think, as early as Hesiod. I am not referring primarily to the famous lines in the *Theogony* (27-28), where the Muses tell Hesiod they know how to tell lies that are like the truth but also how to sing the truth (*alêthea*) when they wish. It is possible that in these lines "truth" is ambiguous, but I am not fully persuaded that Hesiod is doing more than asserting the privileged status of truth and in some sense claiming this status for himself. More interesting with regard to the truth is the opening of the *Works and Days*. Hesiod ends the short prologue in line 10 with the assertion, "I would speak the truth, Perses," and this is followed immediately by the famous declaration that there is not one *eris* ("strife") but two, one good and one evil. After this apparently unequivocal opening, however, the clear dichotomy between the two poles of good and evil with which the passage opens is undercut in the lines that follow,³ and it becomes evident these poles collapse into one another. Hesiod's point seems to be that the ambiguity of the word *eris* (and there are other such words in the poem) corresponds to a similar ambiguity in the real world, where the division between strife and striving, between good and evil, constructive and destructive competition, ultimately breaks down.

¹ The title *Alêtheia* is given only by Plato. Since it clearly serves Plato's purpose in the context of the *Theaetetus*, it has been argued that the title is Plato's own invention (see Untersteiner, vol. 1, p. 72). There is no such uncertainty with regard to Antiphon's title. We have no good evidence for dates of Protagoras' and Antiphon's treatises, but the consensus is that Protagoras' work is the earlier. A recent plausible interpretation of Antiphon's views on morality and self-interest (see Nill) takes them to be a response to Protagoras.

² Three times in fragment 44C Antiphon refers to giving "true" testimony.

³ I have discussed this passage at greater length in *Cabinet of the Muses*.

Word and world, **logos** and **pragma**, do indeed correspond, in the sense that both embody a similar ambiguity.

On my reading of this passage Hesiod is fully aware of these implications concerning the ambiguous nature of language and reality and the correspondence between the two. He may also have a sense that the coherence of a **logos** is an important element of its truth. It is also plausible, though we hardly have enough evidence to assert it, that the idea that truth might be ambiguous was a significant element of Protagoras' thought, and this may help to explain the genesis of statements later interpreted to mean such things as "contradiction does not exist," "it is impossible to tell a lie," etc. Consider the dual title that has come down to us for Protagoras' main work: *Truth* (*Alêtheia*) or *Overthrowing Arguments* (*Kataballontes*, sc. *Logoi*). The second title implies a struggle, an *agôn* between more than one **logos**, and the plural number and present tense of the participle seem to imply that different **logoi** may win different "throws,"⁴ but no single **logos** necessarily emerges the final victor. The competition is "ongoing." Protagoras' title would clearly and directly have challenged Parmenides' "Way of Truth," not only by asserting the primacy of humanity (*anthrōpos*) as a standard of reference, but by asserting a different view of truth. In the "Way of Truth" Parmenides had radically severed truth from reality, confining all negativity to the "Way of Appearance" (*Doxa*). In so doing, for the first time he made the truth depend solely on coherence.⁵ The truth of Parmenides' "Way of Truth" has nothing to do with its correspondence or lack of correspondence with reality, but is a product only of its internal logical structure. My reading of the sophists is that they employed the standard of coherence in determining the "truth" of a **logos**, while not abandoning the idea of correspondence between **logoi** and reality. Competing **logoi** might reflect an actual ambiguity in reality.

Before coming to the surviving fragments of Antiphon's *Truth* I next want to pause briefly to consider some ideas about truth found (both explicitly and implicitly) in the *Tetralogies* ascribed to the orator, Antiphon of Rhamnous. My use of the *Tetralogies* to illuminate the sophistic work *Truth* relies in part on my acceptance of two assumptions: that the orator and the sophist are, in fact, the same Antiphon, and that the *Tetralogies* are genuine works of the orator. Both assumptions have often been denied, but both seem to me to be gaining ground in recent years (though not without dissenters). I cannot, of course, fully support either assumption here, but let me briefly indicate my reasoning. I should add, that as long as the *Tetralogies* are accepted as sophistic or rhetorical works of the second half of the fifth century--that is as expressions of the thinking of the period--it is legitimate to use them to illuminate another work of the same period, namely *Truth*, even if their author was not the sophist Antiphon.

The name Antiphon was fairly common in Athens and elsewhere and we know with certainty of several later political figures and a tragic poet who cannot have been the same man as our sophist. But the ancient tradition is overwhelmingly in favor of identifying the orator and sophist; the rare dissenters argued on stylistic grounds alone and apparently had no further evidence to support their opinion.⁶ In modern times the separatist position was considerably encouraged by the new papyrus fragments discovered early in this century. In particular, the beginning of what is now numbered 44A (= 44B DK; see n. 24 below), though variously restored by scholars, was commonly understood to present a strongly egalitarian view of human society that was quite incompatible with the known aristocratic life and political tendencies of the orator; moreover, the sophist's apparent criticism of the judicial process evidently conflicted with the orator's frequent statements in support of the laws and the courts. It was thus inconceivable to many that the same man could have written both sets of works.⁷ These points have been answered in various ways (e.g., expressions of support for the legal process in a courtroom speech are scarcely evidence for the speaker's--let alone the speech writer's--personal view of justice), but the

⁴ The Greek metaphor is from a wrestling match.

⁵ Earlier thinkers like Xenophanes and Heraclitus (if he was earlier) may have developed elements of a coherence theory of truth, but Parmenides clearly takes it far beyond any of his predecessors.

⁶ See Gagarin in *GRBS*. Decleva Caizzi (1984) reviews scholarship on identity.

⁷ This view is perhaps most strongly expressed by Luria.

strongest counter-argument has been provided by a recent papyrus find (*POxy.* 3647). This short fragment contains only a dozen lines of complete text (44A, col. 3), which add little to our understanding of Antiphon's ideas, but much more importantly it provides a few letters from the ends of lines in the preceding column, and these conclusively disprove all earlier restorations of the beginning of 44A and eliminate the radical egalitarianism that had hitherto been assumed there.⁸ Thus at this point the major obstacles to the unitarian view have been eliminated and the traditional unitarian view is beginning to dominate.⁹

Nothing so dramatic has affected debate over the authenticity of the *Tetralogies*. The ancient tradition gives no hint that their authenticity was ever doubted in antiquity. In modern times the case against their authenticity was most strongly pressed at the end of the last century; but currently, despite lingering questions about certain details, there seems to be growing agreement that they are works of the sophistic period and as likely to have been written in Athens as anywhere, in which case there is no good reason to deny the ascription to Antiphon.¹⁰ True, the stylistic differences between these and Antiphon's other three surviving speeches are considerable, but since the *Tetralogies* are clearly a different genre, served a different purpose, and may have been composed a couple of decades or more before the courtroom speeches, such differences are perhaps not surprising.¹¹ My own view is that Antiphon (who died in 411) was an Athenian intellectual, contemporary with Socrates, who was interested in the whole spectrum of "sophistic" issues in the second half of the fifth century, and whose special area of expertise was oratory and the courts. I take the *Tetralogies* to be sophistic exercises (in some sense) that use the model of a courtroom contest (*agôn*) to explore different arguments on various issues that are relevant not only to legal cases but also to other sorts of competitive *logoi* (those intellectual competitions mentioned by Gorgias in *Helen* and scorned by Cleon in the Mytilenean debate).

As I see it the main issue in the *First Tetralogy* is the relationship between truth and "probability," and in the *Second Tetralogy* the relation between error, causation and responsibility. These same interests would explain why so much of the content of the papyrus fragments of *Truth* (which represent the majority of what survives from that work) is devoted to questions of law and justice. To see all these works as the product of a single person is in my view eminently plausible, though to be sure not provable.

In considering what the *Tetralogies* can tell us about truth, I shall confine my remarks to the first two *Tetralogies*, which are the most interesting in this regard. The *First Tetralogy* presents a relatively straightforward dispute about a question of fact: did the accused kill the victim or is someone else the killer? The exercise is constructed in such a way that the direct evidence, which consists of the reported testimony of an eye-witness, supports a guilty verdict but is not conclusive, so that Antiphon can explore the various arguments involving *eikos*--"probability" or "likelihood." The plaintiff argues that there is no other likely suspect and that because of his previous dealings with the victim, the defendant is in fact the most likely suspect. The defendant must be guilty, since both the direct evidence and the likelihood point to him. The defendant responds that the direct evidence is doubtful (it comes from the victim's slave who died immediately afterward, who cannot have had good grounds for his testimony, and who did have reason to implicate the defendant) and that many others are more likely than he to have killed the man. In his second (and last) speech he also adds an alibi to show "not in likelihood but in fact" (*οὐκ ἐκ τῶν εἰκότων ἀλλ' ἔργῳ*, 2.4.8) that he could not have been the killer.

Now, the standard response to the large use of probability arguments in early Greek rhetoric was laid down once and for all time, so it seems, by Plato. For a recent statement of the

⁸ See Decleva Caizzi's new edition and most recently Ostwald. Note that even before these new discoveries, a few earlier scholars (e.g., Moulton 344-45) had cautioned that the idea of class differences rested entirely on hypothetical textual restorations.

⁹ E.g. Barnes, Cassin, Decleva Caizzi and Ostwald.

¹⁰ See especially Decleva Caizzi's edition of the *Tetralogies*; *contra* Sealey.

¹¹ See esp. Dover. The courtroom speeches are probably all from the last decade of Antiphon's life (i.e. ca. 420-411).

response, let me quote, *exempli gratia*, Guthrie: "The essential theoretical basis of rhetoric was that which distinguished it from the beginning, . . . namely that 'they held the probable (or likely-seeming, plausible, *eikota*) in more honour than the true."¹² Guthrie is quoting from *Phaedrus* 267A, where Plato ridicules the work of earlier and contemporary rhetoricians. But we should not be misled by Plato's authoritative treatment of the subject and should recall instead his well known hostility to rhetoric. For in fact, Plato's assessment is to say the least very misleading.

It may be accurate to say that likelihood was a basis of rhetoric, and perhaps even that it was an essential basis. This would not be inconsistent with the implications of a passage in Gorgias' *Helen* (11), where he argues:

For if all men on all subjects had memory of things past, <understanding> of things present, and foreknowledge of things to come, **logos** would not be similar in similar fashion;¹³ but as it is, it is not easy to remember the past, or to examine the present, or to prophesy the future, so that most men on most subjects make opinion (**doxa**) an adviser to their mind. But opinion, being perilous and uncertain, leads those who use it into perilous and uncertain prosperity.

Gorgias implies that under actual conditions of at least partial ignorance likelihood will play a large role in the opinion men rely on, but this is a far cry from saying that likelihood or opinion is held in more honor than truth. Rather, this passage of Gorgias in fact implies a clear preference for the truth, when it is knowable. But the sophists and orators recognized that it often is not knowable (and these are the cases that will most likely end in litigation in court), and so they train themselves in the use of arguments from likelihood and in other devices for swaying human opinions.

This attitude is clear in the *First Tetralogy*, where the fictional situation is carefully constructed so that direct evidence for the truth is not conclusive and the litigants are compelled to seek the truth by means of **eikos** arguments. The plaintiff begins by apologizing for his use of **eikos** arguments, which are necessitated by the difficulty of knowing what happened in cases like this (2.1.1-2). Later the defendant argues that if the plaintiff is going to consider likelihoods equal to the truth, then he too should be allowed to do the same, and since the likelihood in fact supports his side, he should be acquitted (2.2.8). This is not an assertion of the primacy of likelihood, but indeed just the opposite. It implies that factual truth is normally primary but that the plaintiff in this case has wrongly equated likelihood with truth.

The defendant begins his final speech by asserting that he is trusting in "the truth of the things that were done by me" (*τῇ ἀληθείᾳ τῶν ἐξ ἐμοῦ πραχθέντων*, 2.4.1). This and similar expressions with the verb *prassô* (often in the passive voice) imply that there exists a "factual truth" (i.e. a single truth corresponding to the facts) which, if known by all, would settle the matter. The same implicit view of truth and likelihood underlies the defendant's presentation of his alibi, which proves his innocence "not in likelihood but in fact" (*οὐκ ἐκ τῶν εἰκότων ἀλλ' ἔργῳ*, 2.4.8). In my view the alibi is introduced after all the **eikos** arguments as Antiphon's way of saying that in the end a direct knowledge of the truth will overwhelm arguments from likelihood, which only have force when the truth is not known.

In the *First Tetralogy* "truth" designates a statement that corresponds to the *pragmata*, to what really happened. A somewhat different view of truth emerges from Antiphon's *Second Tetralogy*, which in my view was written as a companion piece to the *First Tetralogy*. In the *Second Tetralogy* a boy has died after being hit by a javelin thrown by a youth during a training session. The boy's father argues that the youth is guilty of unintentional homicide, which in Athenian law was punishable by exile for one year. The youth's father replies that the boy caused

¹² *The Sophists* (Cambridge 1971) 180. For other versions see, e.g., George Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton 1963) 32, and even Brian Vickers, *In Defense of Rhetoric* (Oxford 1988) 69-70, who in general argues strongly against Plato's view of rhetoric.

¹³ The text is uncertain here.

his own death by running out in front of the javelin at the wrong time; thus the boy is in essence his own killer, and as a result the killer has in fact already been punished!

The plaintiff in the *Second Tetralogy* begins his case by drawing a distinction between those cases where the facts (*ta pragmata*) are agreed on and those where they are in dispute, adding that in this case he expects no dispute. He then presents a simple statement¹⁴ of the facts of this case (3.1.1): "my boy, struck in the side by a javelin thrown by this youth on the playing field, died on the spot. Therefore I charge him not with intentional but with unintentional homicide." As predicted, the defendant does not dispute these facts but he does offer instead a radically different statement of the truth of these *pragmata* (3.2.3): his son "did not kill anyone, according to the truth of what he did (κατά γε τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὃν ἔπραξεν)." Although this is essentially the same expression as cited above from the *First Tetralogy*, the truth sought here is different. Here the truth is not a direct statement of facts ("he killed the man") that competes with an alternate statement ("he did not kill the man") to determine which corresponds with reality, but rather an interpretation of or judgment about a given set of facts that competes with an alternate interpretation of the same facts.¹⁵

Now this "interpretative truth" proposed by the defendant in the *Second Tetralogy* cannot depend solely on its correspondence with reality, since the plaintiff's truth also corresponds with the same reality. Nor is the defendant's truth, like Parmenides', solely a function of coherence, as he immediately makes clear with a hypothetical argument (3.2.4): "If the javelin had hit and wounded the boy because it carried outside the boundaries of its proper course, then we would have no argument (*logos*) against the charge of homicide." In other words, if the reality was different, his *logos* would necessarily be different. In short, each speaker's *logos* must correspond to the facts, but in this case correspondence alone cannot be a sufficient criterion for "the truth of the events."

The *Second Tetralogy* thus presents two opposed truths, each of which corresponds with reality, but only one of which will win the jurors' verdict. As the defendant tells the jurors at the beginning of his second speech (3.4.1-2): "your task is to recognize that we litigants are likely to judge the matter by favoring our own side (*kat' eunoian*) and each of us is likely to assume his case is just; but you must view the events with a righteous mind, for their truth (*hē alētheia autōn* [sc. *tōn prachthentōn*]) is only discernable from what is said (*ek tōn legomenōn*)."¹⁶ The implication is that the truth of this case (the "jurors' truth"?) is determined from the *logoi* of each side, and will depend at least partly on the coherence of the two *logoi*. In other words, from two different *logoi* a single truth will emerge which best meets the test of coherence, while still, of course, maintaining its correspondence with reality.

We should bear in mind, however, that this "jurors truth" would emerge only if the *Tetralogies* were actual court cases. In Antiphon's fictitious cases no verdict is rendered. It appears that his purpose is not to help the reader determine the (single) truth of each case, but rather to show them how to present the truths of different sides of the case. And our ultimate judgment of the truth of the *Second Tetralogy* may be that the truth of the whole work lies not in the *logos* of either litigant by itself, nor in some ultimate verdict rendered by the imaginary jurors, but rather in a dialectical tension between the two arguments. Just as in Hesiod's description of *eris* the apparent polarity of good and evil collapses into a complex ambiguity where the same *eris* is both

¹⁴ For the style of this sentence in comparison with the more elaborate style of the rest of the argument, see Zuntz.

¹⁵ Similarly, Gorgias defends Helen in his speech not by arguing for an alternate set of facts (as had been done by Stesichorus in his *Palinode* and others) but by proposing an alternate interpretation of the standard version of the facts, namely that Helen sailed to Troy with Paris, thereby causing the Trojan War.

It may be helpful to compare the distinction drawn by Perelman (esp. p.101) between "judicial proof," which is "concerned only with fact," and "juridical proof," which is concerned with interpretation of the law.

¹⁶ ὑμᾶς δὲ χρή, γιγνώσκοντας ὅτι ἡμεῖς μὲν οἱ ἀντίδικοι κατ' εὔνοιαν κρίνοντες τὸ πρόγμα εἰκότως δίκαια ἐκάτεροι αὐτὸνς οἰόμεθα λέγειν, ὑμᾶς δὲ ὅσιως ὄραν προσήκει τὰ πραχθέντα· ἐκ τῶν λεγομένων γὰρ ή ἀλήθεια σκεπτέα αὐτῶν ἔστιν.

good and bad, so the two opposed claims in this case collapse into a larger truth that both the thrower and the victim (and perhaps the trainers and others as well) are responsible in some sense. The truth of the *Second Tetralogy* is thus a complex *logos* about the complexity of shared responsibility.

It is now time, at last, to turn to the work entitled *Truth*. The starting point for my interpretation of this work is Morrison's study of fr. 1 DK,¹⁷ which reads, according to his vastly improved text: ἐν τῷ λέγοντι οὐδέ γε νοῦς εἰς, ἐν τε οὐδὲν αὐτῷ οὔτε ὁν δύψει ὁρᾶς ὁρᾶν μακρότατα οὔτε ὁν γνώμη γιγνώσκει ὁ μακρότατα γιγνώσκων" ("Someone who says one thing does not in fact have one thing in mind, nor is there for him one thing, neither any of those things the one who sees best sees with his sight nor any of those things the one who knows best knows with his mind"). Morrison follows Galen in understanding the importance of this statement to lie in the opposition between cognition and sense perception implied in the neither/nor expression at the end. He also understands that the sentence makes a claim about language: a single *logos* does not correspond to either a single thought or a single perception. This is the important point for us: someone who speaks a single *logos* has more than one thing in mind and more than one thing in reality corresponds to that *logos*.

Of course, even if we were certain of Morrison's text,¹⁸ we could hardly be certain of their meaning without more context. I suggest, however, that in this statement Antiphon had in mind the complexity of things (*ta pragmata*) and the corresponding complexity of *logoi*. The work which this statement introduces, then, might contain not a single unequivocal statement of a truth, such as that *physis* is more real or truer than *nomos*, but a complex *logos*, perhaps one that sees some truth in both *nomos* and *physis*. The overall truth of the *Truth* might then be found in the dialectical tension between these individual truths.

Before turning to the papyrus fragments, let me note one other fragment that may come from *Truth*: "Men consider things they see with their sight more credible (*pistotera*) than things for which examination of the truth (*ho elenchos tēs alētheias*) leads into the unseen (*aphanes*)."¹⁹ This fragment is not usually assigned to *Truth*, and Morrison's arguments for the assignment are weak, but the fragment may come from this work. With regard to the two kinds of truth we have been discussing, the truth that is here said to be examined could be factual truth or interpretative truth.²⁰ In both the *First* and *Second Tetralogies* the truth is not apparent, though for different reasons, and the fragment could be imagined as part of the argument in either one.

With these rather speculative possibilities in mind, I turn to the papyrus fragments.²¹ I shall focus on three examples of ambiguous truth, namely the relationship between nature (*physis*) and law (*nomos*), the relationship between Greek and Barbarian, and the idea of justice.

1. Antiphon discusses *physis* and *nomos* primarily in 44B. I do not want to repeat the views of earlier scholars on this question, which have been well summarized by Ostwald's recent treatment. I agree generally with the line of thought suggested by Kerferd and others, that Antiphon is not an unequivocal supporter of *physis*, though I do not accept Kerferd's hypothesis

¹⁷ See "The Truth of Antiphon," p. 40.

¹⁸ Morrison's text and interpretation are accepted by, e.g., Guthrie, p. 202-3.

¹⁹ οἱ γὰρ ἀνθρώποι ἀττα ἀν ὄρῶσι τῇ δύψει πιστότερα ἡγοῦνται η οἵς εἰς ἀφανὲς ἥκει ὁ ἔλεγχος τῆς ἀληθείας. The translation is Morrison's. DK do not include this fragment, and Thalheim assigns it to a speech of the orator (fr. 35), but Morrison (in Sprague, p. 214) assigns it to *Truth*, arguing that the last two words are not part of Antiphon's text but are intended to assign the fragment to *Truth*. This seems unlikely, but even without an indication of provenance, it is possible that the fragment comes from *Truth*. The traditional assignment to a speech of the orator on behalf of Myrros is not secure either.

²⁰ The same expression "examination of the truth" occurs in Ant. 5.35 (the *Murder of Herodes*), where, as in the *First Tetralogy*, the issue is one of fact and there is a similar mix of questionable direct evidence and arguments from likelihood.

²¹ I shall use the numeration 44 A, 44B, and 44C, established by Decleva Caizzi in her authoritative publication of the papyrus fragments. These fragments are traditionally numbered 44B, 44A, and 44 (or 44C).

that Antiphon is merely examining the views of others. Rather, Antiphon is assessing the advantages and disadvantages of both **nomos** and **physis**. To quote Ostwald (p. 303), "It rather looks as if Antiphon's theme was to delineate the advantages that accrue to a human being from following, respectively, the dictates of society and those of nature. Partial truth is to be found in both."

Even making allowances for the fragmentary nature of our text, it is hard to see any systematic treatment of **nomos** and **physis** in Antiphon's remarks. Statements are made, especially in the first two columns of 44B, that appear to associate truth or reality only with nature, but other statements cast doubt on such a conclusion. Indeed, the only unequivocal value assumed in this section is what is advantageous (**xumferon**) to a person. Sometimes it is more advantageous to follow **nomos**, sometimes **physis**.

The association of truth with **physis** is clearest when Antiphon contrasts the harm that comes from violating **nomos** as harm **dia doxan** (harm that comes from the negative opinions of others) with the harm from violating **physis** which is harm **di' alêtheian** (col. 2). This contrast between **nomos** and **physis** continues with examples of how "most things that are just according to law are inimical (**polemios**) to nature." Later (in col. 5) Antiphon adds other examples of conduct "inimical to nature" in that they "involve more pain when less is possible"; he cites specifically such conduct as defending oneself only when attacked and treating one's parents well despite being mistreated by them. But it is not clear that Antiphon is giving a blanket endorsement to such behavior, despite the additional pain associated with it. In column 6 he criticizes the current system of justice for not being effective, but this is not the same as advocating a simple return to the dictates of **physis**.

There are other indications that Antiphon's point is not to contrast the true advantage/harm of nature with the false advantage/harm of law, but rather to emphasize that the latter is dependent on the recognition of others in the society. The harm that comes **dia doxan** may be just as true, in the sense of corresponding to real harm, as that which comes from nature. Thus both **physis** and **nomos** may have some value. The seemingly clear opposition between the two begins to break down particularly in column 3, where we learn that the advantage of living and the disadvantage of dying both belong to nature. We also learn that, "according to a correct account" (**orthoi ge logoi**) pain and pleasure are equally helpful to nature and equally advantageous (presumably to humans), "for things that are *in truth* advantageous must not harm but must benefit." Not only do these statements call into question the unequivocal beneficence of nature; they also suggest that the truth, at least with regard to what is advantageous, may be more complex than commonly assumed. It appears, then, that in fragment 44B Antiphon is raising questions about or demonstrating inconsistencies in current views about **nomos** and **physis**, harm and benefit, and advantage and disadvantage, without (as far as we can tell) reaching any definite conclusion in his own views.

Such an attitude may also be suggested by the phrase **orthos logos**. Protagoras is said to have spent a day with Pericles discussing a legal situation very similar to that of the *Second Tetralogy* in order to determine who was guilty (the youth, the officials, or the javelin itself) "according to the most correct account" (**kata ton orthotaton logon**). The criteria for determining the most correct account are not stated, but on the analogy of the *Second Tetralogy*, it is possible that the most correct account involved some sort of dialectical tension between two or more different accounts, a **logos** that ultimately implicated all three suspects. Thus in the contest between two or more different **logoi**, the most correct **logos** is not necessarily any of the individual competing **logoi**. Similarly, in this fragment of *Truth*, the correct account seems to be one that both asserts and questions the association of **physis** with truth, reality and advantage. I make this tentative suggestion fully aware that the gaps and the fragmentary context make it hazardous to draw any conclusion about Antiphon's overall meaning. But it is certainly a serious possibility that his overall assessment of **physis** is intentionally ambiguous.

2. Ambiguity is also present in 44A, where Antiphon says, "we have become barbarians toward each other, when by nature we are all created similarly in all respects to be both Barbarians and Greeks." The first half of this statement clearly implies two opposing theses. On the one hand, Greeks and Barbarians are different. The very names imply that these are two different categories,

and the verb **bebarbarômetha** clearly implies that Barbarians (as opposed to Greeks) have a certain identifiable, and negatively valued, character.²² The difference between Greek and Barbarian may also be supported by the contrast between their laws, which was probably mentioned at the beginning of the first sentence, though this is now missing.

On the other hand, Antiphon is asserting that Greeks and Barbarians are identical (*πάντα πάντες ὄμοιώς*); and their identity is further supported by "the necessary attributes of nature," which are spelled out in the following sentence. Breathing, laughing, and the rest provide no grounds for distinguishing between these two categories. (now fragmentary). Antiphon's point is not simply that Greeks and Barbarians are similar by **physis** and different by **nomos** (if that is a point here), but also that Greeks are both different from Barbarians and also identical with them. Here too the truth is a complex combination of two opposed **logoi**.

3. The third ambiguity involves the definitions of justice in 44C. Antiphon demonstrates that two popular understandings of justice—justice as not harming anyone who has not harmed you, and justice as obedience to the city's laws—lead to conflicting results. More specifically, behavior demanded by the city's system of justice (examples of which are given in 44B) results in unjust behavior according to the "not doing harm" rule of justice. There is no indication that Antiphon intends his paradox to be an indictment of the city's justice. It would be odd indeed if the ultimate conclusion of a work entitled *Truth* was the condemnation as "unjust" of the common requirement of the law that a witness tell the truth. It seems unlikely, moreover, that Antiphon would urge witnesses to give false testimony in order to protect their friends, since he could surely argue that the lie that avoids harming a friend or a neutral party would in at least some cases surely hurt someone else who has not hurt the witness.

It is frustrating for modern scholars not to know how this fragment continued, but in addition to pointing out contradictions or inadequacies in the city's system of justice, Antiphon would surely have had little difficulty in arguing that every action hurts someone who has not himself done the agent any harm. It thus seems more likely that Antiphon's purpose is to point to ambiguities and contradictions in our thinking about justice. Conduct that is just in one regard is unjust in another, and neither of the two definitions of justice proposed is entirely valid. This is the most likely conclusion to be drawn from the statement (col. 2) that either one of the two definitions is unjust or they both are. Both are in some ways unjust, but also in some ways just. And any ultimate "truth" about justice would probably have to include aspects of both.

The truth of Antiphon's *Truth* is thus a complex and ambiguous discourse about a complex and ambiguous world, involving both correspondence and coherence. As in the *Second Tetralogy* we can see Antiphon manipulating different arguments and looking for suggestive contradictions that will illuminate some of the obscurities of this world. Plato, of course, was horrified at the possibility that the truth might be ambiguous or that contradictory statements might both contain an element of truth. He took the sophists' claims to be a complete perversion of the notion of truth and argued that "Protagoras' *Truth* is true to nobody" (*Tht.* 171C) and that, as discussed above, the rhetoricians honored probabilities more highly than truth (*Phdr.* 267A, 272D-273C). But Plato's criticisms, especially on points about which he felt strongly, are certainly not a valid guide to the thinking of the sophists.

One last speculation: it seems clear from the preserved fragments of Antiphon's other main sophistic work, *Concord*, that this was quite different from *Truth*, and many scholars have speculated on the difference. Nestle went so far as to ascribe *Truth* and the *Tetralogies* to the sophist and *Concord* and the three courtroom speeches to the orator. More typical of modern views is Cole's idea (p. 100) that *Truth* pushes a radical critique of social order, while *Concord* may have been a companion piece that pushed the advantages of social harmony. My own speculation along somewhat different lines is that *Truth* proposed the complex and ambiguous truth I have just outlined, whereas *Concord* contained those statements of popular wisdom that on the surface, at least, seem unambiguous, or at least statements whose ambiguity Antiphon decided not to explore.

²² Cf. Eur. *Orestes* 485-86.

Concord presents the consensus of non-competing *logoi*; *Truth*, on the other hand, is at war with itself, as Antiphon explores the contradictions of the world as he sees it. And this very *logos* about contradictions is itself a *Truth*.

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